



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

*Maryland's Social Services Agency*



### MEDIA RELEASE

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### **FIRST LADY KATIE O'MALLEY AND DHR CELEBRATE FOSTER PARENTS OF THE YEAR**

*Baltimore County honors Melissa and Nathan Rivers*

**BALTIMORE** – First Lady Katie Curran O'Malley joined the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) to celebrate foster parents selected by their local departments of social services as Foster Parents of the Year. The First Lady hosted an afternoon reception at Government House to honor foster parents. The event was held on Sunday, May 17, 2009.

"I am pleased to help DHR recognize foster parents for playing such a vital role in the lives of children separated from their birth families," said First Lady O'Malley. "That separation can be one of the most traumatic occurrences in a child's life. Caring, committed foster parents provide the sense of security a child needs most during this very difficult time."

"Last night, more than 9,000 children went to sleep some place away from their birth families," said Brenda Donald, Secretary of the Department of Human Resources. "Most children do best in individual family environments, so even when they can not be with their birth families, it is comforting to know that they are with other families who have stepped in."

In recognition of May as Foster Parent Appreciation Month, each of the 24 local departments of social services identified a foster parent that has gone above and beyond to serve children. Those foster parents have earned the title of Foster Parent of the Year from that jurisdiction.

The Baltimore County Department of Social Services selected **Melissa and Nathan Rivers** as their foster parents of the year. Since becoming foster parents, the Rivers have had four children in their home. They have been a tremendous support to the birth families and have worked tirelessly to ensure that the children in their home receive the nurturing needed during separation from their families.

Maryland continues to recruit additional foster parents to be resources for children in care. Those interested are asked to call 1-888- MD-KIDS2 (1-888-635-4372) for more information.

The 2009 Foster Parents of the Year honorees statewide include:

- Martin O'Malley, Governor
- Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
- Brenda Donald, Secretary

Allegany County  
**Sue and William Goss**

Anne Arundel County  
**Alfred and Ellen Long**

Baltimore City  
**Demetri Davis**

Baltimore City  
**Phillip and Randi Goodwin**

Baltimore City  
**Deborah Joseph**

Baltimore City  
**Theodore and Arnissa Parker**

Baltimore City  
**Wayne and Brenda Williams**

Baltimore County  
**Nathan and Melissa Rivers**

Calvert County  
**Mitchell and Eileen Ray**

Caroline County  
**Dale and Debra Hicks**

Carroll County  
**Catherine Goldsborough**

Cecil County  
**Shane and Lisa Southerland**

Charles County  
**Michael and Rhoshon Hayes**

Dorchester County  
**Wanda Hill**

Frederick County  
**Kirk and Jamie Keel**

Garrett County  
**Glen and Lisa Marsh**

Harford County  
**Bryan and Lisa Marsh**

Howard County  
**Sharon Barr**

Kent County  
**Helen Nicholson**

Montgomery County  
**Charles and Brenda Carafana**

Prince George's County  
**Richard and Aaron Hooks-Wayman**

Queen Anne's County  
**Joyce Jones**

St. Mary's County  
**Warren and Teresa Crouch**

Somerset County  
**Michael and Kimberly Strong**

Talbot County  
**Richard and Kindel Kimball**

Washington County  
**Tom and Toni Barnhart**

Wicomico County  
**Chadwick and Maria Steward**

Worcester County  
**Sharron Chambers**

The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state's social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; and provide temporary cash, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also administers programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 638,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland's fourth largest state agency.